

Giving Thanks to Our Police and Law Enforcement

By Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23)

This week marks National Police Week and as your Congressman I wanted to invite others to take a moment with me to stop and reflect on the sacrifice and dedication of our law enforcement. The sacrifices and accomplishments of our police and other law enforcement happen on a daily basis and deserve more than a week of recognition. Our officers deserve our acknowledgement and thanks for helping to prevent crime and for their continuous commitment to ensuring safe communities.

Texas lost a record number of officers in the line of duty in 2007, leading the nation in officer deaths nationwide. 2007 was one of the deadliest years for officers across the country since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. A report by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund and Concerns of Police Survivors counted 186 officer deaths, up from 145 in 2006. An additional 61,000 officers are assaulted each year.

Over the last few years the risks faced by law enforcement in our part of Texas, particularly along the border, have greatly increased. As Mexican drug cartels vie for control of the lucrative drug smuggling routes along the US-Mexico border, violence has grown tremendously and lead to the deaths of more than 2,500 Mexican nationals last year. Of those killed, hundreds were law enforcement officers. I would like to recognize the sacrifice of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agent Luis Aguilar, who was killed in the line of duty earlier this year by a suspected drug smuggler. Agent Aguilar's death is a tragic reminder of the risk faced by all the law enforcement along our border.

Federal law enforcement agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Customs and Border Patrol, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) work along side our local police and sheriff's departments and they too deserve our thanks.

As first responders, law enforcement personnel not only respond to the needs of our local communities but also to the needs of our country. I say thank you from the bottom of my heart for your bravery and for keeping us safe.

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Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) serves as a Member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee and the powerful House Appropriations Committee.